CLASSIFICATION OFFICE DECISION

Title of publication:	Guide To A Humane Self-Chosen Death
Other known title(s):	Not stated
OFLC ref:	0900841.000
Medium:	Book
Author:	Pieter Admiraal M.D.
Publisher:	WOZZ Foundation
Country of origin:	Netherlands
Language:	English
Applicant:	Comptroller of Customs
Classification:	Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to the Voluntary Euthanasia Society of New Zealand (Inc) and its members who have attained the age of 18 years.
Descriptive note:	None
Display conditions:	None
Date of entry in Register:	18 September 2009
Date of direction to issue a label:	No direction to issue a label has been issued

Summary of reasons for decision:

The book Guide To A Humane Self-Chosen Death is a serious book that gives information about methods of suicide, and the laws around euthanasia. In the hands of its intended readers, the seriously ill and elderly, the book is unlikely to be injurious to the public good.

The authors have presented the information so that it is unlikely to be useful to someone attracted to the idea of impulsive suicide. The book treats the reader as a rational person who is able to make sensible decisions about suicide. However, the information is instructional and refers to attempted suicides in this context as "failures". There is considerable concern in New Zealand about the country's rate of suicide, and vulnerable readers are likely find that the book presents suicide as a desirable option.

The book's authors and its importer do not wish to make the book widely available. The Classification Office agrees that the book requires a restriction that recognises the book's power to both help and to endanger. A restriction of the book to members of the Voluntary Euthanasia

Society of New Zealand (Inc) who are over the age of 18 years protects the most vulnerable people in New Zealand from the book while also allowing the information to be available to those most in need.

The Classification Office has considered the effects of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 on the application of all the classification criteria. The restriction limits the likelihood of harm to the greater public, while preserving the rights of affected persons to have freedom of access to information of their choice. It is the minimum restriction that can be applied to prevent harm, and is justifiable in a free and democratic society given the real risks in making the book available to unsuitable persons, risks that the authors themselves acknowledge.